



Congressman Jon Porter

Veterans Update

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"It is the bravery and courage of our veterans that has protected our nation from foreign invaders and brought democracy to the far reaches of the world."

Did you know?

- **Nevada is home to more than 240,000 veterans**

Porter Report - Veterans

As Nevada's newest Member of Congress, I am honored to represent the Third Congressional District, one of the fastest growing regions in the United States. Nevada's Third District is also home to thousands of veterans, a number that continues to increase as more and more veterans choose to make Southern Nevada home.

Last month we celebrated Memorial Day honoring our nation's most distinguished citizens – veterans of America's Armed Services. Veterans distinguished themselves by serving our country with honor and dignity. These men and women served at different times, and in different places, but each one shared the willingness to put their country before themselves.

I am keenly aware of the important issues facing our nations' veterans today. In Congress, I am closely monitoring legislation regarding health care, benefits, and funding for veterans' programs, and I will continue to work hard in support of veterans, especially those in the Silver State

Veterans Legislation in Congress



In the 108th Congress, I have been actively supporting legislation benefitting veterans. With my support, the House of Representatives passed three important pieces of veterans legislation in the month of May.

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, HR 100, passed the House on May 7. This legislation would strengthen the rights and protections afforded to military personnel called to active duty.

On May 21, the House passed HR 1911, legislation to enhance cooperation and the sharing of resources between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

The next day, HR 1683, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2003 was passed. This bill would provide for cost-of-living (COLA) increases for disability compensation payments for veterans.

I will continue to monitor additional pieces of veterans' legislation, and I will work to keep you informed of developments in Congress as they take place.

Issue Brief: Concurrent Receipt

When I meet with veterans in Southern Nevada, I am often asked to address the subject of concurrent receipt. Under current law, military retirees are not allowed to receive both full retirement pay from the Department of Defense and full disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Veterans should not be penalized for their honorable service to our nation. I am proud to be a cosponsor of HR 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2003, a bill pending in Congress that would permit veterans to receive both military retired pay and disability compensation.

This legislation is currently pending in both the House Armed Services Committee and the House Veterans Affairs Committee. While I am not a member of these committees, I fully support this legislation and will continue to work for Nevada's veterans on the federal level.

Funding for Veterans



Funding for veterans programs is an important issue and should be a top priority for Congress. In this session of Congress I voted in favor of the most recent Omnibus Appropriations bill. The Veterans Affairs portion of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 budget allocates \$24.4 billion for VA medical care. This is 5.2% (\$1.2 billion) more than was requested by

President Bush. The bill also allocates 11% (\$2.5 billion) more than in FY 2002.

On March 21, 2003, the House of Representatives passed H. Con. 95, the Congressional Budget Resolution. The budget resolution exempts veterans' benefits, including compensation for service connected disabled veterans, from across-the-board spending cuts. It was further agreed that veterans discretionary spending - primary veterans' health care funding - would be increased by at least \$1.8 billion above the Administration's budget request to prevent cutbacks in medical service for Veterans.

The budget resolution also provides the largest increases ever for veterans spending, veterans benefit programs, and veteran's health care programs.

Select members of the House and Senate met to work out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget resolution, and the final version was passed into law April 11, 2003. You can be sure that, as the House and Senate work to implement the budget, I will vote to meet the needs of Nevada's veteran community.

Contact Me

Should you require additional information regarding veterans' issues, if you would like to inform me of your views, or if you require assistance with Veterans Affairs claims, please contact me anytime in either my Henderson, NV or Washington, DC office.

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